

# Linguistic Analysis of English in Short Message Services (SMS) Text Used by Telugu Native Speakers

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**ABSTRACT** - SMS is the technology that allows text messages to be received and sent over mobile devices. The most understandable way users create written characteristics in their language is through usage of standard spelling, punctuation and capitalization in order to make their messages recognizable as entire sentences. This can also show however, interactive and affective characteristics of conversation even in its written state. SMS also allows users to abbreviate words without losing any meaning e.g. October and November can be shortened to 'Oct/Nov' etc. Similarly, punctuation, such as the full stop, is often unnecessary, as the end of a line will signify the end of an utterance. The resourceful use of punctuation, 'constructing paralinguistic markers quite ingeniously as well as breaking orthographical conventions in an inventive manner', appears to be a personal stylistic choice. Users often take advantage of the presence of both written and spoken aspects of SMS. One way a text message might reflect this would be to combine features of a written medium with features of a spoken medium, but this combination is usually not intentional. In fact, I have collected about Graduate five hundred SMS short forms in English from students to find out how they used, what is method followed, is there really a systematic method followed when using these SMS short forms or it is only arbitrarily or haphazardly done, how certain lettered words become numbers and some others letters and numbers both, example: for you become '4u', when certain vowels are deleted and when some others cannot be deleted and if so what is the systematic way of doing so. As I have been discussed so far, I have found some would-be-called rules behind some, for instance, vowel deletion, consonant deletions, germination and determination rules of vowel as well as of consonants. In fact, this research paper is interested in defining what type of language SMS language is. Despite the various features of written language one can find in text messages, SMS cannot be considered as 'written'.

**Keywords:** Vowel duration, Vowel deletion, Degemination.

## I. INTRODUCTION

SMS (Short Message Service) Text is a Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) that allows the sending of short text messages. It is a technology that enables the sending and receiving of messages between mobile phones. SMS first appeared in Europe in 1992. SMS text messaging supports the languages internationally. SMS is successful all over the world. The number of SMS messages exchanged everyday is enormous. The individual messages are called text messages. SMS messages over the wireless network, trapped in an incredibly boring meeting. Today, technology is moving towards the future of the wireless web. People want these devices to do everything from accessing their e-mail accounts, to utilize the internet, to access personal and corporate information, Whatsapp etc.

The paper deals with an important and yet less researched phenomenon, i.e. the use of SMS short forms. Indeed, it is a very interesting area of research. Very few researches have been done in this area if any at all. In general, SMS service

has developed rapidly since its introduction and is very popular throughout the world. In 2001, more than 250 billion SMS were sent, comparing to the 16 billion sent in 2000. It is particularly popular amongst young urbanites as it allows for voiceless communication, useful in noisy environments, for instance, markets that would defeat a voice conversation, and also buffered communication since the message the sender wants to convey can be accessed by the receiver any time.

Because of the limited message lengths and tiny user interface of mobile phones, SMS users commonly make extensive use of abbreviations and short forms, particularly the use of numbers for words, for example, "4" in place of the word "for", and the omission of vowels, as in the phrase "txt msg" which actually stands for "text message". This causes SMS to be credited with creating a language. Daily Telegraph, a newspaper in England once reported in 2003, 'Girl writes English essay in phone text shorthand'. While predictive text software that attempts to guess words or

letters reduces the labor of time-consuming input, abbreviations of words are still popular, especially with the younger users where SMS short forms a part of their culture.

The challenge of the small screen size and its limited character space has motivated the evolution of an even more abbreviated language than that which emerged in chat rooms and virtual worlds before. The composition of the language of text messages shows an expressive facet of mobile telephony, specifically the use of slang or newly manufactured words. This within a small peer group underpins group membership and also serves to exclude those who are not competent with the slang. This is an aspect of the identity formation of teenagers and thus, 'those outside the group will either not understand the content of the slang, or will appear inept when trying to use it.

### DEFINING SMS

There are as many definitions of the term 'SMS' as there are people who are interested searching in these messages. In fact, the term "SMS" is an acronym of Short Message Service. However, I provided the following definitions as far as in this paper is concerned.

1. Short Message Service usually refers to wireless alphanumeric text messages sent to a PCS telephone. The GSM protocol was the first and only protocol to support text responses from a PCS telephone. Several competing protocols support the receiving of these messages but not the transmitting, or the responding back to the sender. The supporters of these other protocols are now adding on the ability to initiate or respond to text messages. Sometimes SMS is incorrectly used to refer to any short electronic text message on a wireless network. Its original and correct meaning simply was, a short text message to a PCS telephone.
2. Short Message Service is a kind of message send and received in phone cells and is available on digital GSM networks allowing text messages of up to 160 characters to be sent and received via the network operator's message center to your mobile phone, or from the Internet, using a so-called "SMS gateway" website. If the phone is powered off or out of range, messages are stored in the network and are delivered at the next opportunity.

### The Purpose of Using SMS Short forms:

If we look at the small size screen, we will certainly find that it permits us to send messages up to 160 letters. So, if we need to write longer messages, we cannot according to the space provided by this screen. And before the human mind nothing is impossible. In fact, among the many reasons behind using SMS and the most widely spread of which are the following:

1. Economy in space. In the sense that since the screen allows us to write only a limited number of words, SMS short form allows us to write many words as stated above.
2. Saving time. In fact, the world we are living in is the era of speed in every sense of the world and so composing in SMS saves our time.
3. Economy in efforts. To write many words needs effort and by using SMS short form, we spend little effort.
4. To cope with who are around you. In the sense that you can not avoid using these SMS short form while people around you are using it.

### SMS TEXTS USE IN INDIA

As a part of the world, India is one of the countries in which English has a very high status, especially where English is considered to be an official language. And so the use of SMS short forms is spread among English educated people and especially among young people. As I have collected my data from some students in the University of Hyderabad, all I have asked information and SMS messages are using them whether male or female. When asked about their using these SMS short forms, they almost all replied in the reasons I have just mentioned above.

However, it is a fact that the spread of using SMS short forms in India is to some extent late to that in the west. Almost five-to-ten years, this phenomenon has spread in India. Indians being influenced by the west, the stated to use these forms. It is also important to mention here that very few studies have been done in this area of research in some parts of India as I have been informed by some of the people, researcher have met during this research paper.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Halliday, (1976) in his inaugural address talked about how people understand language. In this article first, he talks about folk linguistics and deviation of meaning in language with the concepts of saying and naming-meaning; reflection and action about activity. The discussion of ideas about language, it is important not to suggest that these ideas can be isolated from ideas about everything else. Our picture of language is part of our picture of the world. In specifically, it is part of our picture of the world of meanings; and the value of the semiotic interpretation is that it shows us how the world of meanings is structured and what its constants are. they started with the child, so let us end with the child. Before he can talk about meaning, a child is engaging in acts of meaning; before he has a mother tongue, he is using his own child tongue to organize his view of the world (and of himself), and to interact with the people around him. By the age of eight or ten months a child already has a rich idea of what he will be able to achieve through learning language. As he learns language, he learns through language, and as he learns through language, he learns

about language; on these foundations he constructs his view of the world.

Bernicot, Volckaert, Goumi, & Bert (2012) reported a study titled "Forms and functions of SMS messages: A study of variations in a corpus written by adolescents". This research was conducted to gain insights into SMS communication among French-speaking adolescents. The authors analyzed the effects of writers' characteristics (age, gender, and SMS-messaging experience) on message length (number of characters and number of words), dialogue structure (with or without an opening and a closing), and message function (informative vs. relational). The main aim of this study was to look at several variables other than spelling, which might be just as important in characterizing SMSes written by adolescents. The length of the SMS messages, their structure, and their social function. Most studies on SMS messaging have looked mainly at their orthographic content. A few studies have also analyzed measures such as SMS message length, structure, and functions.

Baron (2005) reported a study titled, "Instant Messaging and the Future of Language". This study focused on Computer-mediated communication (CMC) and Instant Messaging (IM) behavior of many younger teens as reflected in their language patterns. The author also examined these patterns in contemporary college students. During the past three years prior to publication of this study, Baron with the help of his students at American University in Washington D.C. investigated use of IM on American Online Instant Messenger (AIM).

Crystal (2001) in his book *Language and Internet* as stated above focused on the notion of "Netspeak" to describe the many forms of language that shows up on the Internet. He considered other terms such as "netlish," "weblish," and "cyberspeak". This text (what text?) would be improved and selected a less quaint term such as simply "computer-mediated communication" (CMC) or "electronic discourse." Crystal described language use and language change within "Internet situations" such as, (i) e-mail, (ii) synchronous chat groups and, (iii) asynchronous "chat groups" and the World Wide Web. Within each Internet situation, he discussed and, where possible, explicated the development of new graphic conventions such as emoticons and abbreviations, Internet-derived neologisms, and features of communicative activity that could only have emerged through electronic media (e.g., forms of interaction in synchronous chat, and "message intercalation" in e-mail. Finally, Crystal's views on "Language and the internet" provides a useful and well discussed overview of Internet related communication modes such as Netspeak, -- "netlish," "weblish," and "cyberspeak" and also how Internet-mediated language ought to be different from language use in other modalities. Crystal reminds us that

the Internet is less a technological fact than a social fact, and "its chief stock-in-trade is language" (p. 236).

Coupland (2010) advanced an insightful critique of two of the major approaches to research in sociolinguistics, viz., dialectology and variationism. According to him, dialectology associated with England succeeded in freezing both linguistic and social change. Specifically, by connecting with historical linguistics, traditional dialectology attempted merely to preserve rural English linguistic forms only of the past and yet ignored the processes of social change completely. Coupland's main argument in this chapter is that many assumptions relating to concepts such as class, gender, standard, dialect etc have remained unchallenged since the early years of the discipline of sociolinguistics and that it is time to revisit the conventional dogma. The first step in initiating this change is to blend concepts of linguistic change and social change such that we engage with what he terms, "Sociolinguistic change". This unified notion, Coupland argues will study language ideological change in the context of social change. This requires us to study changes in linguistic usage within a broader matrix – in which individuals and groups perceptually segment verbal repertoires at any given point in time and in different social contexts. The focus should be not just on age and cohort effects, but also include "period effects" that deal with socio-cultural ethos at any given time.

Thurlow and Poff (2011) reviewed a number of studies conducted on code adaptations in text messages in multilingual cultures, predominantly, English in contact with some local language of South Africa, a bilingual country. The authors observed the text messaging research done in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, South Africa, Nigeria, New Zealand, Kuwait, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, as well as the UK and USA. They noted that pragmatically-oriented studies have begun to address, amongst other things, turn-taking, code-switching, openings and closings, and general communicative intent. They also considered, explicitly or not, the pragmatic implications of message length, textual complexity, grammar and punctuation, spelling and orthography, and the use of emoticons. In every case, studies typically situate pragmalinguistic phenomena with a view to broaden cultural and interactional variations, which has important implications for any gross generalization about the uniform nature of texting.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The Language Use history questionnaire was used to make sure that all the participants were bilingual Telugu-English users. Mobile Phone Questionnaire was used to gather information about the mobile phone use and SMS texts exchanged during ten days, prior to my meeting them. Total 10 respondents 5male and 5female. Age range is between

18-24years. All of them were undergraduate students studying in colleges affiliated to Osmania University, Hyderabad.

#### IV. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

I have collected the Data from Under-Graduate Students of Osmania University; the total data was five hundred SMS short forms in English from their Mobile phone, duration of the ten days period of time. The data was taken from the sent messages only and in the research sample size are five male participant and 5female participant equally selected.

##### 1. DATA ANALYSIS

From students to find out how they used, what is method followed, is there really a systematic method followed when using these SMS short forms or it is only arbitrarily or haphazardly done, how certain lettered words become numbers and some others letters and numbers both, example: for you become '4u', when certain vowels are deleted and when some others cannot be deleted and if so what is the systematic way of doing so. As I have been discussed so far, I have found some would-be- called rules behind some, for instance, vowel deletion, consonant deletions, germination and determination rules of vowel as well as of consonants. In fact, this research paper is interested in defining what type of language SMS language is. Despite the various features of written language one can find in text messages, SMS cannot be considered as 'written'.

##### VOWEL DELETIONS

Initial Vowel deletions

after - ftr  
and - nd,n  
end - nd  
extra - xtr  
unknown - nknwn

In some of the words initial vowels are deleted because the consonants sound similar to the vowel in its initial point. Eg. an = n, ex = x etc.

##### MIDDLE VOWEL DELETION

about - abt  
back - bck  
credit - crdt  
doing - dng  
ever - evr  
how - hw

When they used SMS for the words, the middle vowels are also not used most of the time.

##### FINAL VOWEL DELETION

able - abl  
bake - bak

came - cam  
give - gv  
have - hv  
live - lv

In the final position of a word, final vowels are generally dropped in SMS.

##### ALL VOWELS ARE DELETED

after - ftr  
back - bck  
call - cl  
not - nt  
class - cls  
ring - rng  
road - rd

Interestingly in SMS script, people used only the consonants of the word, instead of full words. Generally, in English, words cannot be realized without any vowels but in SMS this is frequent.

##### CONSONANT DELETIONS

Initial Consonants deleted

your - ur  
youth - uth  
whole - hole

Most of the initial consonants are not found in the initial stage, because when they utter the word initial letter is very important. Especially that words in consonants sounds. Another thing is most of the consonants in an initial stage change the letter from one letter to another letter. The letter changed only in consonants.

we - v  
then - den  
this - dis

##### MIDDLE CONSONANT DELETED

achieve - aciv  
anything - nytin  
back - bk  
first - fst  
mock - mok  
night - nt  
talk - tak  
what - wt  
when - wen

Interestingly during this kind of deletion, it is found that the deleted consonants are generally silent in the word or its deletion is not strikingly noticeable.

##### FINAL CONSONANT DELETED

and - n  
borrow - boro  
though - tho

In this kind of deletion, either the deleted letter is clearly understood in the context of usage or involves a deletion of a generally unpronounced letter(s).

**DEGEMINATION**

Vowel Degermination

Degermination of Vowels as well as vowel deletion:

ee > e	
agreement	- agremnt
ee > i	
meeting	- mitng
oo > u	
book	- buk
good evening	- gudevng
good	- gud
looking	- lukin
oo > Ø	
book	- bk
cool	- kl

As shown above, vowels are not degeminated in SMS Degermination of Vowels like, aa, ii, uu, are not available in English. These types of words could not find.

**CONSONANT DEGEMINATION**

cc > c	
accurate	- acuret
occupy	- occupy
dd > d	
add	- ad
addition	- adistn
address	- adres

ff > f	
affix	- afx
afford	- afrd
difficult	- difcult
office	- ofis

ll > l	
all	- al
call	- cl ,kal
excellency	- xlnc
excellent	- xlnt

mm > m	
command	- comnd
commit	- comit
commitment	- comtmnt

nn > n	
dinner	- dnr

oo > o	
book	- bk

pp > P	
happy	- hapy

rr > r	
carry	- cari
arrest	- arst

ss > s	
class	- clas

tt > t	
cassette	- caset kset
committee	- comite
letter	- letr

This usage is done in a highly context bound environment where some abbreviations cannot be understood and are sometimes ambiguous.

**SOUND CHANGE**

Vowel > Vowel.

Vowel replaced with other vowel letters:

o > u	
love	- luv
look	- luk
good	- gud

Vowel > Consonant.

i > y	
like	- lyk
night	- nyt
right	- ryt
time	- tym

Consonant > Consonant.

academic	- akdmic
bycot	- bykt
cake	- kek
call	- kal
them	- dem
with	- wid

Consonant > Vowel.

any	- ne
carry	- cari
day	- de

Numbe

Word > Number.

ate	- 8
for	- 4
first	- 1
to, too	- 2

## Word &gt; Letters+ Number.

any one	-	ny1
activate	-	actv8
before	-	b4
create	-	cr8
goodnight	-	gudn8
great	-	gr8
hate	-	h8

## Word &gt; Number+ Letters.

file	-	5l
forget	-	4get
for me	-	4me
once	-	1ce
tomorrow	-	2mrw
to night	-	2nt

## Abbreviation.

account	-	a/c
example	-	ex
see	-	c
please	-	pl
phone	-	ph
we	-	v
why	-	y
are	-	r
you	-	u

Such a case of abbreviations are useful also in forming new words in the general spoken conversation of SMS users as well as those who have no access to the exact words.

## V. CONCLUSION

In fact, we have taken it as a challenge to do my paper in this area of study, viz, SMS short forms. SMS, because it is created in a written medium, has some features of casual printed communication. The most understandable way users create written characteristics in their language is through usage of standard spelling, punctuation and capitalization in order to make their messages recognizable as entire sentences. This can also show however, interactive and affective characteristics of conversation even in its written state. SMS also allows users to abbreviate words without losing any meaning e.g. October and November can be shortened to 'Oct/Nov' etc. Similarly, punctuation, such as the full stop, is often unnecessary, as the end of a line will signify the end of an utterance. The resourceful use of punctuation, 'constructing paralinguistic markers quite ingeniously as well as breaking orthographical conventions in an inventive manner', appears to be a personal stylistic choice. Users often take advantage of the presence of both written and spoken aspects of SMS. One way a text message might reflect this would be to combine features of a written medium with features of a spoken medium, but this combination is usually not intentional.

## VI. FINDINGS

As we have been discussed so far, we have found some would-be- called rules behind some, for instance, vowel deletion, consonant deletions, germination and determination rules of vowel as well as of consonants as stated above discussion. Some systematic ways of deletion are also dealt with. This deletion can be initial, medial and final. It can be also of complete vowel deletion. Vowels are also sometimes replaced by consonants and vowels and consonants are replaced completely.

As vowels can be deleted, consonants also can be deleted initially, medially and finally. Moreover, sometimes consonants are totally deleted. Whole words are replaced by numbers as is clear so far. There is also what can be called partial replacement of words or letters by numbers as in *f2tk* among others. It is important here to mention that there is a kind of abbreviation included in using SMS short forms.

## VII. SUGGESTIONS

In addition, it is very interesting work to do some research in this much demanded area of research. However, regarding the shortage of time, it is not possible to cover the whole of it. Nevertheless, it is the researcher's aim and wish to continue this research in future for it is worth researching. In fact, this research is interested in defining what type of language SMS language is. Despite the various features of written language one can find in text messages, SMS cannot be considered 'written'.

In short, to the best of my knowledge, very little research has been done on SMS short form identification and code. Thus, future work could be devoted to fine-tuning the capture of rules for human short form creation and in turn, infer the rules for short form decoding. The present corpus of SMS short forms can also be extended to facilitate future research.

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